

Such meetings will not be so much with the object of forming new branches, but to get up local interest generally, and to increase the membership of the Union, and to spread a knowledge of our literature. Miss Parish will also be ready to visit home schoolrooms, where people either feel that they are a little rusty or would like help in such subjects as are new to them; she will also help governesses who are not ex-students, but whose children work in the P.R. School, and will visit any school on the register which may desire it.

Mrs. Franklin then drew attention to the prominence now given by other schools to Nature Work and Handicrafts; this ought to make us doubly alert in these subjects, which we consider, more or less, as specialities of our own.

Lectures to Nurses on P.N.E.U. principles have been given in London, and might be given by ex-students in any other place where interested nurses can be gathered together. Miss Evans has given such lectures, and found the nurses most interested.

Many parents outside the P.N.E.U., and who have no other interest in our work, find that Mrs. Clement Parson's list of books to be read aloud to children very helpful.

Miss Dale's method of teaching to read is considered by Professor Heath to be excellent because it is so slow! He considers that children should not be able to read fluently before they are eight or nine years old.

The next Conference is to be held in Bristol in June.

Miss Mason held a small Conference in London, on her way to Neuheim; it consisted chiefly of preparatory schoolmasters, to two of whom the work was new. Previous to the Conference the examination questions on this (the Summer) term's work had been sent round, and those who were coming had been invited to set any questions they would like to see answered by the children. There were five girls (Class IV.), six girls (Class III.), and thirteen boys from Mr. Gibb's school (Class II.). These last narrated their answers.

Of course it was difficult for the children to concentrate their attention on the work in hand with so many onlookers, but although the teachers knew they would have done better in class, the visitors were on the whole much pleased and interested. Three of the boys who had not been selected to come had insisted upon doing so, and people were much

impressed with the fact that examinations were not looked upon as a bugbear.

It is interesting to hear that the Headmaster of the Public School at Harpenden, who was at the Ambleside Conference last year, has joined the P.R. School in classes I. and II., and will, if possible, include class III. The great difficulty in big schools lies in the arrangement of the time table, owing to the visiting masters.

There is to be an extremely interesting Course of Lectures on Latin Oral Teaching at Cambridge these holidays; the lecturer's boys are taught to read Latin and Greek plays like French ones.

After Mrs. Franklin's talk, of which the above are sketchy notes, a discussion took place. Many thought that more Arithmetic could be done in the time given, especially in the lower classes, and thus the standard of Arithmetic in the P.R.S. would be as high as that of other subjects.

We next discussed Miss Pennethorne's paper on "Obedience," which was read at the May Conference, and published in the June "Review."

The students present at the meeting were the Misses Bernau, Evans, Faunce, W. Kitching, McShee, Mew, Owen, Smeeton, and J. Wilkinson.

## TRAVEL NOTES.

I should like to tell you something about a day we spent on the Farne Islands. We made up a party of seven, and started from Alnmouth (Northumberland), at about 9-45, getting to a little village called Sea Houses at 10-45 or so. We had intended to sail out to the Islands, but on reaching the coast we found that as there was not a vestige of wind we should have to be rowed the whole way. However, with the aid of two pairs of field-glasses the time passed quickly enough; we saw puffins, guillemots, shags, cormorants, black-backed gulls, herring gulls, kittiwakes, terns, (arctic and sandwich), and eider ducks. The island on which we landed



is of course quite uninhabited, with very little in the way of soil, the only flowers being sea campion, a little thrift and sorrel. I think I have never had such a curious sensation as I had that day, standing high up above the sea with hundreds of gulls and other birds wheeling, screaming round our heads, making such a noise that we could hardly hear each other speak; often a mother-bird would flash past, uttering a harsh cry, I suppose to try to frighten us away from her young ones. These baby-birds were a source of great delight to us all—such dear little soft balls of fluff about the size of small chickens; they did not in the least mind being taken up and stroked. The colour of these birds—a soft grey brown—is so very like that of the rocks, that it is difficult to see them, the more so as their usual sleeping place is down between two pieces of rock. Although gulls, guillemots, and puffins, inhabit the same island they do not associate (on land). The guillemots, hundreds of them, swarm on the top of a large rock standing out by itself, their nests just being laid on the top; the gulls build an apology for a nest on the ground, and as soon as the young birds come out and are steady enough on their little weak legs, they creep in between the rocks for protection. The kittiwakes build on small ledges all up the sides of the rocks, where one would imagine that the little ones would roll off, but they don't!

After some time we went to another part of the islands, and were very much interested in the abodes of the puffins; they dig holes in the peaty ground in such profusion that it is quite dangerous (to the eggs and young birds) to walk. Many a time while walking about our feet sank through into someone's nest. I believe each bird makes several holes with a common entrance, about a foot below the surface of the ground, and in each hole she lays one egg.

We spent a few minutes on two other islands watching the arctic and sandwich terns; I think the arctic terns are some of the most dainty little birds I know, the beautiful way in which they dive from a height into the water for fish is most fascinating. If there had been time we would have gone to see Grace Darling's lighthouse on the furthest island, but we could not manage it.

Coming home it rained very heavily, though our enjoyment and enthusiasm were not damped. We noticed that the boat in which we went was of a peculiar shape, long and

narrow, the sides curving in at the top; and we were interested to find out afterwards that it is of a type of unimmersible boat which was in use in Northumberland before the Shield's Lifeboat was invented.

The only inhabitants of all the twenty odd islands, exclusive of the lighthouse keepers, are two watchers who look after the welfare of the birds. We found that we had to have one of these watchers with us when we visited the islands, as the birds are so carefully protected. The islands all belong to Lord Armstrong, with the exception of the nearest to land, which is owned by Government.

A visit to the Farne Islands is an experience which should most certainly be sought by all students of nature.

V. R. S.

## AMATEUR TRAMPERS IN NORMANDY AND BRITTANY.

We found that it is one thing to discuss "A Tramp Abroad," and quite another to actually plan it. We had thought about it so long, and in thinking about it had travelled so far afield mentally, that if a record of our "stay-at-home travels" were possible to obtain, it would result in the history of a tour accompanied by all our friends, and such of our relations as we like, over the entire continent of Europe, in the course of which were encountered all the adventures of which we had ever read or heard, and conducted with the sublimest disregard of ways and means.

Ways and Means considered in the concrete has the meanest way of throwing cold water on anything, of any expression in the English language. It gets to the root of things with a cruelty and definiteness that is simply appalling in its speed and exactitude.

As an example: of the many trips we planned mentally, Stevenson's "Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes" was the first. No sooner, however, did it come under the Ways and Means Committee than any number of difficulties cropped up. (Our particular Committee, I may as well state at once,



consisted of my wife as Chairman, Tinker, our bull-pup, as supporter of any motion she may care to put, and myself as "the body o' the kirk," so to speak).

To begin with, we were sure that Modestine was dead, and to be without her would have damned the enterprise from the start. Then the Chairman thought there might be a confusion of identities among the local peasantry in regard to us, and as Stevenson had recognised the status of the donkey even in the title of his book, it seemed essential that one of us should take the part. Then I regretfully informed the Committee that I could not see my way clear to sleep in the open in a fur cap with ear-flaps. I had a conviction I would be mistaken for some portion of the beast creation, and be eaten or something, and finally the Committee as a body, recollected that the whole place had been terrorized by a "Gordon Bennett" massacre, and so it was given up. Disappointed, our minds wandered further afield, and we discussed Spain (this was about the time of Princess Ena's marriage) and we had a vague feeling that, as a young married couple ourselves, the reigning house had a certain claim on our attention. Besides, the Chairman had Church connections, and we had frequently seen a book called "The Bible in Spain," by one Borrow (a most unfortunate name to live down, we thought) advertised in the "Everyman" list, from which our library receives a contribution from time to time. We have often gone without bread pudding in order to be able to add one of these charming volumes to our shelves. Bread pudding is not a thing we are any of us (except Tinker) fond of, and it doesn't cost 2/-, but one feels one is really sacrificing to culture in going without something to get a book.

I had certain qualifications too suggesting Spain. In early years from a hybrid schoolfellow I had learned to swear in the language, not fluently of course, but with a certain amount of point. I also knew the word for soup, although not quite certain of the variety expressed by it. Soup, however, as a diet for walking on has its limitations, and my other accomplishment, while no doubt useful in its way, hardly seemed the sort of thing likely to secure an *entrée* into the hearts of the people. Besides we felt on going into the matter closely in Committee, that our sense of delicacy would hardly permit us to run the risk of being *de trop*, remembering,

as we did from our own honeymoon experience in an Irish Hotel, literally ten miles from anywhere, how easy it is for the most well meaning of Christians without the slightest intention of imposing on one's good nature, to stick to one like seccotine.

The final blow, however, came in the shape of a conversation with the invaluable Cook's, to whom the poet did not refer as he ought to have done when he wrote—

"We may live without poetry, music, and art;  
We may live without conscience, and live without heart;  
We may live without friends, we may live without books;  
But civilized man cannot live without Cook's."

This conversation very soon established the fact that if Spain was determined on, soup with all its limitations would, as far as we could see, have to be our diet for the next twelve months, let alone during the trip, even were it conducted on the most economical lines.

It is hardly probable, however, that *Pianta* readers are anxious to hear in length and in detail the history of the tours which we did not take, and it is enough that the Committee finally decided on Normandy and Brittany, for three main and sufficient reasons, to wit—

- (1) In their various wanderings none of them had been there;
- (2) At least one member could, with the aid of a certain amount of grimace and gesticulation make herself understood by the wily native; and
- (3) Of quite the least importance, as a body corporate, they could afford it.

This once decided, headway began to be made. Maps had to be got, for if you walk you must be able to know miles, even down to one or two miles, accurately.

On Cook's recommendation (and we can endorse it) we got the maps published by Taride, of Paris; there are no better, and they cover all France; they cost only 1 fr. apiece, can be obtained from any Cook's Agency, fold nicely into the pocket, and two of them covered the whole of Normandy and Brittany. Besides this, they are well printed, and being taken off the Government Military Maps, give far more information than our own Bartholemew maps costing four times as much. We also invested at a cost of 3s. 6d. in an



Opsimeter, which is a little wheel arrangement which you can run over the road marked on the map, taking in all its twists, and then read off on a little dial attached to it, the exact miles and yards of the road you have traversed with it. Anyone going in for walking at all seriously should get one of these little instruments; they take up no more room than a half-crown piece and are extremely useful, not only for tracing the distance, but for translating kilometres or foreign distance units into the English miles, in which one thinks distance.

So equipped we spent many enjoyable evenings reading up the countries, and deciding how much of them we could do in the time at our disposal, and with the limitations as to miles per day which all pedestrians must regard.

At the foot of the page is given a list of those books we found most useful and interesting, but it does not pretend to be by any means complete, and we can only say that spare time spent by the tramper in reading up his route pays itself many times over in the added interest and pleasure the knowledge gives him during his wandering.

#### LIST OF BOOKS.

##### NORMANDY.

Normandy Scenery and Romance	...	...	<i>Home</i>
Life in Normandy	...	...	<i>An English Resident</i>
Through Normandy	...	...	<i>K. S. Macquoid</i>
Rambles in Normandy	...	...	<i>F. Miltoun</i>
White Company	...	...	<i>Conan Doyle</i>

##### BRITTANY.

Picturesque Brittany	...	...	<i>Mrs. Bell</i>
A Book of Brittany	...	...	<i>S. Baring Gould</i>
Summer Holidays in Brittany	...	...	<i>Hutchinson</i>
Through Brittany	...	...	<i>K. S. Macquoid</i>
Rambles in Brittany	...	...	<i>F. Miltoun</i>
Brittany	...	...	<i>Dorothy &amp; Mortimer Mompes</i>
Baedeker's Guide to Northern France.			

(To be continued).